



Cancer Research Center Hotline

Raising Awareness About Clinical Trials

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Improving treatments and lowering the risk for cancer have been realized through cancer clinical trials over the years. Clinical trials test new treatments such as drugs, approaches to surgery or radiation therapy, combinations of treatments, or methods such as gene therapy. Today trials have evolved to include prevention, screening/early detection, quality of life and symptom control.

Clinical trials identify better methods of detecting, treating, and eventually preventing diseases like cancer. The enormous strides made in treating childhood cancer, for example, are the direct result of clinical trials. In the United States today, more than 70 percent of children with cancer live at least 5 years after diagnosis, as opposed to 55% in the mid-1970s.¹

Although clinical trials are available for persons who have cancer and those who might be at higher risk for getting cancer, very few eligible adults participate. In 1999 the American Society of Clinical Oncology reported that only 3% of adult cancer patients participated in clinical trials.¹ In Hawaii, about 2% of the patients diagnosed with cancer participate in clinical trials.²

Dr. Brian F. Issell, Director of the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii's Clinical Sciences Program notes, "*Patient access to national, peer-reviewed clinical trials is an essential component of quality cancer care in our state. Clinical trials provide potentially better treatments while guaranteeing the best evidence-based care in a closely monitored setting.*"³

NCI's New National Initiative - CTES

Because public awareness is low, and health professionals face barriers to participation, the National Cancer Institute initiated the Clinical Trials Education Series (CTES) this past fall. This program was developed to increase awareness of the importance of clinical trials through health professionals who have direct contact with patients, patient advocates and the public. CTES multimedia education materials include publications (resource guides), booklets, videos, and slide presentations on CD-ROM (see diagram). Materials are customized for diverse audiences—health care professionals, patients and the general public—and can be further modified for specific groups.

The Series informs learners about:

- Understanding clinical trials;
- Ensuring protection for patients in clinical trials;
- Participating in clinical trials; and
- Communicating information about clinical trials.⁴

CTES Resources:

For Physicians and Health Educators:

Reference Publications

Cancer Clinical Trials: The In-Depth Program
Cancer Clinical Trials: The Basic Workbook
Cancer Clinical Trials: A Resource Guide for Outreach, Education, and Advocacy
Trainer's Guide for Cancer Education

Slide Programs on CD-ROM

Cancer Clinical Trials: In-Depth Information

Videos

Cancer Clinical Trials: An Introduction for Patients and Their Families

For Public and Patient Education:

Booklets

If You Have Cancer...What You Should Know About Clinical Trials (low literacy)
Taking Part in Clinical Trials: What Cancer Patients Need to Know
Taking Part in Clinical Trials: Cancer Prevention Studies: What Participants Need to Know (* Also available in Spanish)

Slide Programs on CD-ROM

Cancer Clinical Trials: The Basics
Cancer Clinical Trials: The Way We Make Progress Against Cancer

Videos

Cancer Clinical Trials: An Introduction for Patients and Their Families
Cancer Trials...Because Lives Depend On It (general awareness)

These resources may be obtained free of charge by calling 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237) or by visiting www.cancer.gov/publications (click on clinical trials).

Hawaii's Effort to Raise Awareness

The Cancer Information Service of Hawaii, as part of the UH Cancer Research Center of Hawaii, is sponsoring a Clinical Trials Education Initiative using CTES as the centerpiece of the project. Collaboration will be achieved through partnerships with physicians and other health care professionals, patients, and representatives from community health organizations and the private business sector. The overall objectives of this initiative are to:

- Increase clinical trials awareness statewide,
- Collaborate with partners to disseminate the Clinical Trials Education Series, and
- Increase familiarity/use of the Clinical Trials Education Series tools.

A Clinical Trials Education Committee (CTEC) has been formed to develop a statewide clinical trials education plan. Strategies identified in the plan will be implemented beginning in September 2002 with assistance from CTEC members and other community partners. Strategies under consideration include: "tailoring" the CTES tools to reach specific populations in Hawaii; training for Hawaii's educators and health care community on how to use the CTES resources; and mass media promotions. CIS-Hawaii will lead efforts to evaluate the project to determine whether strategies implemented through the initiative contributed to increased clinical trials awareness in our communities.

For more information about the Clinical Trials Education Initiative and how to become involved, contact the Cancer Information Service of Hawaii at (808) 586-5853 or visit the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii's website at www.crch.org.

References

1. National Cancer Institute, Public Health Service, NIH Publication No. 02-5051, Oct. 2001, pp 3-4, 53.
2. Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Cancer Care in Hawaii: Report of the Optimal Care Committee. Honolulu, HI: Office of the Governor. 2001.
3. Issell, Brian F., MD, "Availability of Clinical Trials for Hawaii Cancer Patients." *Hawaii Medical Journal*. Vol. 50, June 2001, P 161.
4. NCI - Cancer Clinical Trials - Educating and Communicating, 12/01.

National Cancer Institute

What Are Clinical Trials All About?

Booklets for Patients with Cancer



These easy-to-understand booklets provide answers to frequently asked questions about clinical trials.



To order, call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Persons with TTY equipment may dial 1-800-332-8615.



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